



## Staph Infections

Staph aureus is the most common bacteria on the skin of people. Most of the time it does not cause any problems, but occasionally it can cause an infection of the skin. Recently, methicillin resistant staph aureus (MRSA) has become a common cause of skin infections in the community. MRSA is a subclass of bacteria that require a different class of antibiotics to cure.

**Cause:** Staph infections are caused by the bacteria colonizing a wound. Staph may enter any break in the skin and cause an infection.

**Symptoms:** Staph infections may present as skin infections, pimples, boils or an abscess. Classically, the skin around the wound is hot, tender, bright red, and swollen. There may be breakdown of the skin and fluid draining from the wound. Early in the infection, fever may not be present. Symptoms will generally continue to spread and worsen until the wounds are treated.

**Treatment:** Antibiotic cream may be used for minor infections, and oral antibiotics are used for more advanced infections. MRSA is easily treated with oral antibiotics – usually clindamycin or bactrim. In some instances, family members may also be treated by your physician.

**Prevention:** The most effective preventive measure is good hand washing. Bacteria are spread by direct contact from an infected person's skin. Any infected person with an open wound should keep the wound covered as well. Because staph bacteria can survive 24 hours on clothing and other objects, it is important not to share towels or clothing with an infected person.

**Follow up:** If your child is doing well you can follow up with your primary care doctor in 3-5 days. You should follow up immediately if your child develops any of the following:

- Fever above 102 degrees not responding to medication
- No improvement after two days of medication
- Neck stiffness, neck pain, or headache
- Rash after taking medications
- Increasing swelling or redness at the wound site

Please note: These guidelines are not meant to diagnose any condition, or treat any condition not diagnosed by a physician. They are provided for general information only. If you are concerned about your child's condition, call a physician or 911 immediately.